



# Employee Assistance Service Unit

SUPPORTING THE WELL-BEING OF OUR CORRECTIONAL PROFESSIONALS

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## Preventing Burnout (part 2)

### The Difference Between Stress and Burnout

Burnout may be the result of unrelenting stress, but it isn't the same as too much stress. Stress, by and large, involves too much: too many pressures that demand too much of you physically and psychologically. Stressed people can still imagine, though, that if they can just get everything under control, they'll feel better.

Burnout, on the other hand, is about not enough. Being burned out means feeling empty, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring. People experiencing burnout often don't see any hope of positive change in their situations. If excessive stress is like drowning in responsibilities, burnout is being all dried up. While you're usually aware of being under a lot of stress, you don't always notice burnout when it happens.

### Stress vs. Burnout

#### Stress:

- Characterized by over-engagement
- Emotions are over-reactive
- Produces urgency and hyperactivity
- Loss of energy
- Leads to anxiety disorders
- Primary damage is physical
- May kill you prematurely

#### Burnout:

- Characterized by disengagement
- Emotions are blunted
- Produces helplessness and hopelessness
- Loss of motivation, ideals, and hope
- Leads to detachment and depression
- Primary damage is emotional
- May make life seem not worth living

#### Causes of burnout

In many cases, burnout stems from your job. But anyone who feels overworked and undervalued is at risk for burnout—from the hardworking office worker who hasn't had a vacation or a raise in two years to the frazzled stay-at-home mom struggling with the heavy responsibility of taking care of three kids, the housework, and her aging father.

But burnout is not caused solely by stressful work or too many responsibilities. Other factors contribute to burnout, including your lifestyle and certain personality traits. What you do in your downtime and how you look at the world can play just as big of a role in causing burnout as work or home demands.

### Work-related causes of burnout

- Feeling like you have little or no control over your work
- Lack of recognition or rewards for good work
- Unclear or overly demanding job expectations
- Doing work that's monotonous or unchallenging
- Working in a chaotic or high-pressure environment (continued on back)

### SAVE THE DATE!

The 4th annual Military Peer Support Program 5K Run / Walk will be June 14, 2015.



The Military Peer Support Program is challenging all Institutions, Division, Family and Friends to assemble the largest participating group for a chance to win the Patriot Award. For additional information please contact Sgt. Keith Germain at 508-509-9419

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#### WE ARE ON THE:

- INTRANET
- WWW.MASS.GOV
- FACEBOOK AT MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

## Preventing Burnout (part 2) continued

### Lifestyle causes of burnout

- Working too much, without enough time for relaxing and socializing
- Being expected to be too many things to too many people
- Taking on too many responsibilities, without enough help from others
- Not getting enough sleep
- Lack of close, supportive relationships

### Personality traits can contribute to burnout

- Perfectionistic tendencies; nothing is ever good enough
- Pessimistic view of yourself and the world
- The need to be in control; reluctance to delegate to others
- High-achieving, Type A personality

### Warning signs and symptoms of burnout

Burnout is a gradual process that occurs over an extended

period of time. It doesn't happen overnight, but it can creep up on you if you're not paying attention to the warning signals. The signs and symptoms of burnout are subtle at first, but they get worse and worse as time goes on.

Think of the early symptoms of burnout as warning signs or red flags that something is wrong that needs to be addressed. If you pay attention to these early warning signs, you can prevent a major breakdown. If you ignore them, you'll eventually burn out.

### Physical signs and symptoms of burnout

- Feeling tired and drained most of the time
- Lowered immunity, feeling sick a lot
- Frequent headaches, back pain, muscle aches
- Change in appetite or sleep habits

### Emotional signs and symptoms of burnout

- Sense of failure and self-doubt
- Feeling helpless, trapped, and defeated
- Detachment, feeling alone in the world
- Loss of motivation
- Increasingly cynical and negative outlook
- Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment

### Behavioral signs and symptoms of burnout

- Withdrawing from responsibilities
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating, taking longer to get things done
- Using food, drugs, or alcohol to cope
- Taking out your frustrations on others
- Skipping work or coming in late and leaving early



It isn't the mountain ahead that wears you out; it's the grain of sand in your shoe.

- Robert W. Service

### Preventing burnout

If you recognize the warning signs of impending burnout in yourself, remember that it will only get worse if you leave it alone. But if you take steps to get your life back into balance, you can prevent burnout from becoming a full-blown breakdown.

Authors: Melinda Smith, M.A., Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., and Robert Segal, M.A.

## Domestic Violence Awareness

### April is Victim Rights Month

#### If You Are a Victim

It may be difficult for you to reach out for help. But you may find that victim advocates can offer you information, support, and access to helpful services you might not know about. Victims are often relieved to know that agencies in their community want to make sure they are safe and have the help they need to recover from the impact of the crime.

#### What Is A Victim Advocate?

Victim advocates are professionals trained to support victims of crime. Advocates offer victims information, emotional support, and help finding resources and filling out paperwork. Sometimes, advocates go to court with victims. Advocates may also contact organizations, such as criminal justice or social service agencies, to get help or information for victims. Some advocates staff crisis hotlines, run support groups, or provide in-person counseling.

#### How Advocates Work with Victims

Advocates offer victims information about the different options available to them and support victims' decision-making. Advocates do not tell victims what to do. Advocates are committed to maintaining the highest possible levels of confidentiality in their communications with victims. However, the level of confidentiality they can observe depends on their position, education, licensure, and the laws in each state. An advocate in a police department may have to

share any information related to an investigation with officers. Yet an advocate at a domestic violence program may be able to keep most victims' confidences private. However, all advocates must report certain types of information to the authorities. For example, they have to report any type of threat to a person (such as clients threatening to hurt themselves or someone else), and they have to report the abuse or neglect of children or elders. It is important for victims to ask about confidentiality rules before they begin working with an advocate.